

GEAR UP Fact Sheet

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs provides federal funding through the U.S. Department of Education for high-poverty schools to prepare students for college.

GEAR UP legislation, written by Congressman Chaka Fattah, was signed into law by President Clinton in 1998.

About 85 percent of GEAR UP students, who are from low income households, graduate high school nationally. About 55 percent of these students go on to college.

Under GEAR UP, students beginning in the seventh grade learn how to apply to college, how to apply for financial aid; school districts also provide for professional development of teachers and parent education stressing the possibilities of a college education. GEAR UP serves as a retention program throughout middle and high school years by showing the path to higher education.

GEAR UP is currently serving 6,311 students in the Philadelphia School District, including 665 graduating seniors at Bartram, King, Rhodes and Strawberry Mansion high schools. This program uses federal funds granted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, with \$8.3 million set aside for scholarships for GEAR UP students over the next five years.

Today's rally is a celebration of high school graduation for this first cohort of students who entered GEAR UP in 2002 in Philadelphia schools under the State-run program.

Thousands of other students from low income backgrounds in Philadelphia public schools have graduated and continued on to college after benefiting from GEAR UP programs under grants to the School District of Philadelphia (1999 to 2006).

About two million students nationally have been served by GEAR UP, with over \$2 billion in federal funding to date.

The GEAR UP Enhancement Act, proposed by Congressman Chaka Fattah in 2007, was included in the House version of the Higher Education Act, which is now in conference. The legislation would change GEAR UP's authorization level to \$500 million from \$200 million, meaning that GEAR UP would be eligible to receive at least \$500 million per year in federal funds.

GEAR UP is designed to enable more young Americans to succeed in middle and secondary school, to study hard, and to take the right courses to become college eligible and competitive for admission to colleges and universities.